

The power behind the finest applications



COMPSOFT PLC

Compssoft is a UK software house that specialises in networked business applications, and provides development tools and vertical market solutions backed up with extensive consultancy and support services.

First established in the seventies, Compssoft made a huge success from downsizing mainframe technologies and providing them on early PCs with improved usability features. In the mid-eighties the company moved into networked PC systems as they became available and reliable, and provided a seamless migration path for developers who wished to develop applications single-user and implement multi-user on a variety of platforms.

Since early customers typically did not have large bases of in-house support, Compssoft developed a policy of keeping very closely in touch with its customers, providing high levels of support in all areas of information technology. Maintaining this philosophy has allowed the company to grow and prosper.

In a modern environment, organisations must use many technologies to implement efficient data management. Compssoft products integrate these technologies to provide coherent platforms, based on industry standards, which result in rapid, cost-efficient application development and implementation.

Current applications must operate in a number of environments simultaneously – in local area networks, over the Internet, on mobile devices, over secure connections - and must be able to use multiple data sources.

Through its flagship product, Compssoft Equinox, the company has become a leading edge provider of information technology, with data management and support services that meet the demands of today's rapidly changing business environment.

Compssoft Equinox

Compssoft Equinox is an application development product that integrates all the complexities of today's information management, and provides a unified logical environment for application developers. Equinox allows developer teams to concentrate on delivering business value rather than becoming distracted by technological functionality.

Early Compssoft products were developed from the powerful models used by mainframe systems to store and manage data. As newer access methods such as relational systems became popular, Compssoft incorporated them into its data management model, and created a simple, powerful and elegant hybrid that retained the performance of the old systems, and included the flexibility of the new.

A unique data model

Equinox presents a view of the data with its natural structure; customers have orders, orders contain items and so on. It also allows relationships to be made in the modern way; each order item comes from a stock line, and has a supplier.

In addition, many applications need to access data subsets that do not change much over time. Equinox supports statically maintained queries, avoiding the need to continually rebuild the same query.

This model gives fine control over design and implementation, backed up by a development environment with support for all the features that a modern professional developer would expect, including links to popular technologies and platforms.

Network-aware development

Applications may be built in Equinox either stand-alone or by networked teams of developers with full content and version control. Once an application is implemented, a unique Publisher system allows later developers to implement and test modifications or upgrades off line and then publish them to the live environment.

Developers can make maximum use of the processing power available on a target network by building applications that take into account the speed of network connectivity. So in network-optimised applications with fast LAN speeds, much of the processing can be made to happen on the clients. On the other hand, with slower connections or where a high power server machine is installed, Equinox can process data remotely either on the server or on local workstations on the server backbone.

Flexible data storage

Equinox allows applications to present and manipulate their data using the most appropriate storage technology. Data may be stored in the proprietary data engine, which is cost-efficient and has fast access, or in standard data repositories such as SQL Server and Oracle to fit in with customers' established solutions strategies. Accessing data in multiple repositories is not a problem – Equinox provides locking services across all environments, and has an extensible architecture that allows the company to build bespoke data access components if required.

The developer's dream

The Equinox development environment is a familiar Windows-based "point-and-shoot" interface, which provides all the usual facilities without the need for command line utilities. It provides a complete development environment for forms, reports, procedures, web pages, data import and export, and other common application elements.

Visual elements are supported by a simple, clean and powerful method language that has won critical acclaim from customers and the press alike for its elegant object-based approach. It adopts an event-based model necessary for modern GUI programming, but removes the need for complex declarations and unnecessary syntactic requirements.

The method language includes flexible interfaces to Microsoft software components such as ActiveX automation objects, and the Windows operating system facilities. The development environment includes a

fully featured debugger and an object browser, providing the modern, fast debugging tools essential for rapid application development.

A powerful application server

The core of Compssoft Equinox is its leading edge applications server, which in addition to data management includes a built-in web server, support for secure sockets and active server pages, as well as in-process and remote process client operations triggered from individual workstations. Development and implementation teams may tune the load balancing of their applications to obtain the maximum benefit from the processing power available on the target network.

An Equinox implementation takes account of real world needs. Its data engine incorporates security features to ensure that risk to data from component failure is minimised. In the event of the failure of backup recovery procedures, Equinox has powerful administrator functions to automatically rebuild and repair applications.

Security

The Compssoft Equinox Security System is a powerful and comprehensive solution that protects each application from unauthorised access both to the application and to the data within it.

At a simple level, application users each have a password-protected login. An administrator controls access to the application via user groups and, in addition, can encrypt data stored on disk. The application server supports secure sockets for on-line financial transactions or other situations where secure traffic is required.

User groups provide the entry point to the optional full security system. Administrators can group together rows (records), columns (fields) and users, and assign rights policies that allow view, edit, delete and so on. The rights take effect at the lowest data access level; if the logged-in user has no access to a particular record, it does not exist for that user.

Protection is also implemented during the development process. Individual elements such as forms may be locked to one developer, and eventually released for testing and use. The Publisher system ensures that development and test environments are kept separate.

The Future

Compsoft has an exciting research & development schedule for Equinox that will further respond to customers' demands for applications that are easy and cheap to develop and maintain, and can run in any environment. It is probable that, in the future, Equinox will target many devices that we cannot currently conceive would run computer software. Major computer and software manufacturers are competing to provide a Net environment and to offer services that integrate Internet and local services into one environment. Compsoft is committed to a vigorously

independent approach that will make use of the best and most successful of these services while minimising dependence on any one of them.

Recommended System Requirements

Clients: Windows 98/NT4/XP/Vista, 1GHz CPU and 256Mb RAM (512Mb for Vista), 30Mb free disk space.

Server: Windows NT4/2000 Server/XP/Vista, 1GHz CPU and 512Mb RAM, (1Gb for Vista), 30Mb free disk space.

<p>Services</p> <p>No software product is complete without a full range of support services. Compsoft's services provide the extra push needed to turn a project into guaranteed success.</p> <p>Operational Support</p> <p>The Support team offers a complete rapid response service over multiple media: Telephone support – instant, direct access to the software authors, with planned escalation to the R&D team for tricky problems e-mail support for lower priority issues Migration and implementation support Onsite support and an "instant" response service</p>	<p>Development Support</p> <p>A design audit ensures applications will operate within reasonable expectations of the software and hardware platforms, and user loading Problem troubleshooting helps with tricky requirements, development issues, or implementation problems</p> <p>Application Development</p> <p>Compsoft Consultancy offers a full cost-efficient planning and development service from requirements gathering to implementation and ongoing support.</p>	<p>Training</p> <p>For developers, Compsoft offers the following training courses:</p> <p>Paced - 3 separate courses from beginner to advanced developer Intensive - 2 weeks to advanced level Fast track – for expert programmers - 1 week to advanced level Tailored training – available to meet specific requirements.</p> <p>Please contact Compsoft for more details on support, training and consultancy services.</p>
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